1: Linton E-5 (1926-27) 1933 FY8 Tanala FY8

II. NATURE OF THE TERRITORY

137 The Tanala territory is, almost without exception, wooded and mountainous. On the eastern side of the divide there are still considerable areas of virgin forest. These, for the most part, are in regions too steep and broken for even the very primitive native methods of agriculture to handle them profitably. Enormous trees of many species rise a hundred feet or more and interlace their branches to form a roof which the sunlight never penetrates. Their larger limbs are covered with veritable hanging gardens of orchids, ferns and airplants. Below this roof the air is laced with a network of aerial roots and vines, with a few smaller trees climbing upward. At the ground there is a stratum of dense undergrowth, mostly succulent, which is so thick that it is almost impossible to travel outside the well-worn trails.

136 The virgin jungle is gloomy and forbidding. It is not silent, for one is never away from the sound of water, gurgling in innumerable little streams and dripping from the high branches, but there seems, at first encounter, to be almost no animal or bird life. One discovers the footprints of wild boar and *fosso* (a cat-like carnivor) but never sees these animals unless accompanied by a pack of hunting dogs. The lemurs, which are actually fairly numerous, are all arboreal and mostly nocturnal, spending their days curled up in the tree tops. The birds, for the most part, keep to the jungle roof and the big black parrots are the only ones which advertise their presence. Even with modern firearms and a good knowledge of jungle lore it is impossible to live on the country.

137 [241] On the less abrupt slopes the original jungle has been cleared away by the natives, who burn new patches year after year and plant their crops in the ashes. The native forest trees grow slowly, for the most part, and land once cleared never again approximates the virgin growth. At the lower altitudes the old clearings are covered with bushes and low trees, with dense stands of the Traveler's Palm. Higher up, the Traveler's Palm becomes scarce and is replaced by great stretches of small bamboo with stems fifteen to twenty feet long. These grow separately or in small clumps and bend under the wind and rain so that, from a distance, they look like drooping fern fronds. Under and between them there is a thick growth of long grass and tough bushes, making it almost impossible to force one's way through.

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782 [437] Chickens are much used for small sacrifices, such as those made in fulfilment of vows. Usually only the head and feet are actually offered, the rest being eaten by the sacrificer. They are also largely used in payment of fees to midwives, circumcisers and medicine-men. [541] Cock fighting, which is an important sport in the plateau, seems to be rare or lacking among the Tanala.

235 *Dokotra*, the large native ducks, are valued much more than chickens and can be bought only at exorbitant prices. They are relatively rare and I never saw more than four or five in a village. Their eggs are considered a great delicacy. They usually sleep and nest in the dwelling.

PETS

231 The Tanala are moderately fond of pets. The *zafimbato*, an animal much like an ordinary tabby cat in size, color and general appearance, is sometimes caught young and tamed. It is allowed to run free and helps to keep down rats and mice. The natives say it does not breed in captivity. Apparently it will cross with the ordinary domestic cat, a recent introduction, but I could not learn whether the offspring are fertile.

In nearly all the villages I saw pet lemurs. Three or four species were represented, a medium-sized gray animal and the large black and white lemur being the commonest. They were always kept tethered by a band around the waist. They seemed to be imperfectly tamed, although this may have been partly due to my being a white man. However, I never saw a native attempt to fondle one and I was often warned that they would bite.

In the southern part of the Menabe territory I saw a few birds kept in cages of open wicker work. These were usually hung up outside, under the eaves of the houses, but I saw one fastened to the top of a long pole. The birds were small and looked like larks or thrushes. Although parrots are common in this region, they do not seem to be kept as pets.

HUNTING

224 [136] The heavy forests of the Tanala country contain many sorts of small game but the only large species are the wild pig and *fossa*, a cat-like carnivor related to the genets. These will attack a human being when cornered, but are not dangerous ordinarily. There are a few Tanala families who live in the forest and subsist entirely on game and wild plants, but they are not numerous. There are no hunting tribes and no individually owned hunting territories. The

bulk of the population hunts only for sport or to vary its regular 224
vegetable diet. Pigs are coursed with dogs, brought to bay, and killed with spears which are shorter, heavier and broader in the blade than the ordinary fighting spears. Old boars fight fiercely and hunters are not infrequently wounded or even killed. Lemurs, birds and other small game are hunted with the blow gun and there is a limited use of the bow (see Weapons).

Most animals are trapped. Pigs are caught with nooses spread across their runs. The noose is attached to a drag pole, 3 or 4 inches in diameter and about 5 feet long, which soon becomes entangled in the underbrush and holds the animal fast. They are also caught in a wooden cage with a drop door held up by a stick. The stick is jerked out by a spring pole which is held down by a trigger inside the cage. The cages are baited with lines of bait leading to them. Pitfalls for pigs are dug in the fields. They are about 4 feet across and 5 to 7 feet deep, with pointed bottoms so that the animal becomes wedged. Two sharpened bamboos are often set upright in the bottom. They are covered with a light framework of sticks and grass, and sweet potato vines are planted around and trained to grow over them.

Lemurs are caught in unbaited traps. These animals are arboreal and rarely descend to the ground. The natives cut long lanes, too wide for the animals to jump across, through the forest. At intervals these lanes are bridged by poles or long bamboos. In the center of each bridge a small V-shaped gate is fastened in such a way that the lemur must pass through it (Fig. 2, a). In the gate there is a slip noose connected with a spring pole or heavy stone held by a trigger in the gate. The animal thrusts its head into the noose and displaces the trigger so that the cord is drawn taut. The cutting of the lanes requires considerable labor, but the same ones may be used for years. Each lane belongs to the family which has cut it and no one else may set traps there. At the present time the government roads are often used in this way. The neighboring tribes say [422]
that if a Tanala traps several lemurs at the same time he will release those he does not want, putting an earmark on them. If they are males he will also castrate them, so that they will grow large and fat. Anyone who catches such a marked animal is expected to return it to its owner. I neglected to verify this among the Tanala, but think it is probably true. The *trandra*, *sora* and *sokona*, hedge- [136]
hog-like animals of which the *trandra* is the largest, are caught in bottle-shaped pits. The mouth of the pit is covered with grass,